



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Wyoming State Office

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Cheyenne, WY 82003-1828

www.blm.gov/wy



IN REPLY REFER TO:
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Case Files:

Wyoming: WYW-174597

Colorado: COC-72907

Utah: UTU-87237

May 13, 2016

Dear Reader:

Enclosed for your review are the Final Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Proposed Land-use Plan Amendments (LUPAs) for the Energy Gateway South Transmission Project (Project). The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) prepared the Final EIS in consultation with cooperating agencies and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, including Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provision of NEPA at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 1500-1508; U.S. Department of the Interior guidance at 43 CFR Part 46; and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) NEPA procedures codified at 36 CFR 220; and other applicable laws and directives.

General Information

This EIS has been prepared to analyze and disclose the impacts of granting a right-of-way on Federal land to PacifiCorp (doing business as Rocky Mountain Power, the Applicant) for the purpose of constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed 500-kilovolt (kV) single-circuit, alternating-current transmission line and amending the BLM and the USFS land-use plans to accommodate the proposed transmission line. The transmission line would begin at the planned Aeolus Substation near Medicine Bow, Carbon County, Wyoming, and would extend south and west to the planned Clover Substation (currently under construction) near Mona, Juab County, Utah, a distance of between 400 and 540 miles, depending on the route selected. The Project also includes (1) constructing two series compensation stations at points between the Aeolus and Clover substations to improve transport capacity and efficiency of the transmission line, (2) adding new substation equipment for electrically connecting the transmission line at the Aeolus and Clover substations and the existing Mona Substation, (3) constructing communication regeneration stations associated with the transmission line, (4) constructing access roads to the transmission line structures where needed and where existing access is not available, (5) other ancillary facilities, (6) rebuilding and reconfiguring two existing 345kV transmission lines between the Clover and Mona substations, (7) rerouting the existing Mona to Huntington 345kV transmission line through the Clover Substation, and, depending on the route selected, (8) relocating an approximate two-mile section of an existing transmission line (the Bears Ears to Bonanza 345kV transmission line) to eliminate multiple line crossings in a short distance.

The proposed LUPAs are identified for areas where the Proposed Action and alternatives are not consistent with the BLM and/or USFS land-use plans, and were prepared pursuant to the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, implementing regulations, and the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (NMFA) as well as both the BLM and the USFS land-use planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610 and 36 CFR 219.10, respectively. The details on each proposed LUPA can be found in Chapter 5 of the Final EIS.

The Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs includes responses to comments received on the Draft EIS and Potential LUPAs, clarifies or adds information obtained after preparation of the Draft EIS, and identifies the Agency Preferred Alternative for the Project. The Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs is a full reprint of the analysis presented in the Draft EIS and Potential LUPAs. As such, it assesses the environmental impacts of the Proposed Action and alternatives, including the No-Action alternative.

The BLM has analyzed approximately 1,451 miles of alternative routes for the proposed 500kV transmission line. Portions of the alternative routes cross land administered by 10 BLM Field Offices (Rawlins, Little Snake, White River, Grand Junction, Vernal, Moab, Price, Salt Lake, Richfield, and Fillmore), three national forests (Ashley, Uinta-Wasatch-Cache, and Manti-La Sal), the National Park Service, and the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission as well as crossing land of the Uintah and Ouray Indian Reservation. The BLM determined the Project to be a major Federal action requiring preparation of an EIS. In addition, amendments would be required to land-use plans affected by the route selected for construction of the proposed transmission line. If the Proposed Action is approved, the BLM would issue a decision and Right-of-Way Grant and the USFS would issue a decision and special use permit for constructing, operating, and maintaining the proposed transmission line and associated facilities. Depending on the route selected for the transmission line, other potentially affected Federal agencies listed above may tie to the analysis in this EIS in issuing decisions and similar use authorizations.

As you may be aware, the BLM Wyoming State Office is also preparing an EIS in response to another application for right-of-way on Federal land for an extra-high-voltage, direct-current transmission line, the TransWest Express Transmission Project. This project is considered in the analysis of cumulative effects. The TransWest Express Transmission Project is proposed by a separate applicant (TransWest Express, LLC) to meet different interests and objectives. The two projects share many of the same transmission line alternative routes. At BLM's request, the two applicants have worked together to co-locate their respective transmission lines, where the transmission line alternative routes coincide, in accordance with the industry standards and to minimize environmental effects. Any adjustments to each project's transmission line alternative routes resulting from coordination of the two applicants are addressed in the Final EIS documents for each project.

An EIS is not a decision document. Rather, its purpose is to inform the public and interested parties of impacts associated with implementing the Applicant's proposal as associated with granting a right-of-way to construct, operate, and maintain the transmission line and associated facilities on Federal lands, and to provide information to other regulatory agencies for use in their decision-making process for other permits required for implementation of the Project. The

Final EIS and LUPAs have been distributed to agencies required to review the Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs and to other agencies, organizations, and individuals that requested copies. A newsletter announcing the availability of the Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs was sent to approximately 14,200 individuals on the Project mailing list, including landowners within 1 mile on either side of the reference centerline of alternative routes considered for the Project.

Availability Period of the Final EIS

The 30-day availability period of the Final EIS begins with the publication of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Notice of Availability (NOA) in the *Federal Register*. The review period will close at the end of the 30-day period, the date of which will be posted on the BLM project website at

http://www.blm.gov/wy/st/en/info/NEPA/documents/hdd/gateway_south/docs.html. While not a formal comment period, the public and agencies can submit comments on the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted electronically at BLM_WY_GatewaySouth@blm.gov and postal mail copies should be sent to:

Tamara Gertsch
National Project Manager
BLM Wyoming State Office
P.O. Box 21150
Cheyenne, Wyoming 82003
(307) 775-6115

Hand delivery of written comments on the Final EIS to 5353 Yellowstone Road, Cheyenne, Wyoming, may occur between 7:45 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding Federal holidays. Envelopes and the subject line of emails should be identified as "Energy Gateway South Transmission Project Final EIS."

Comments received during the 30-day comment period following publication of the NOA will be considered prior to a decision on the Proposed Action.

Comments on the Final EIS should be as specific as possible. It is also helpful if the comments refer to chapters and pages of the Final EIS.

Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or any other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can request in your comment that your personal identifying information be withheld from public review, the BLM cannot guarantee that it will be able to do so. Comments submitted anonymously will not be accepted.

Protest of Proposed LUPAs of the BLM Resource Management Plans

Pursuant to the BLM's planning regulations at 43 CFR 1610.5-2, any person who participated in the plan amendment process for the Project and who has an interest that is or may be adversely

affected by the planning decisions proposed by the BLM may protest the approval of the planning decisions within 30 days of the date the EPA's NOA of the Proposed LUPAs is published in the *Federal Register*. For further information on filing a protest and the required elements of your protest, see the protest regulations on the page following this letter (labeled as Attachment 1).

Emailed protests will not be accepted as valid protests, unless the protesting party also provides the original letter by either regular or overnight mail postmarked by the close of the protest period. Under these conditions, the BLM will consider the emailed protest as an advance copy and will afford it full consideration. If you wish to provide the BLM with such advance notification, please direct emailed protests to protest@blm.gov. All protests, including the follow-up letter to emails must be in writing and mailed to one of the following addresses:

Regular Mail

Director (210)
Attn: Protest Coordinator
P.O. Box 71783
Washington, D.C. 20024-1383

Overnight Mail

Director (210)
Attn: Protest Coordinator
20 M Street SE, Room 2134LM
Washington, D.C. 20003

The BLM Director will make every attempt to promptly render a decision on each protest. The decision will be in writing and will be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested. The decision of the BLM Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior on each protest. Responses to protest issues will be compiled and formalized in a Director's Protest Resolution Report, made available following issuance of the decision.

Only those who submit timely and specific written comments regarding the proposed Project during a public comment period established by the responsible official are eligible to file an objection.

Forest Service Public Review and Objection Period

The USFS will issue a *Federal Register* NOA of the Final EIS, Proposed LUPAs, and draft USFS ROD and will publish a legal notice in the newspapers of record. The notices will contain information about the Project and the 45-day objection period, which begins with the publication of the legal notice in the newspapers of record. Any objections will be reviewed by the reviewing officer during a 45-day objection review period, which will begin at the end of the 45-day objection period. The objection review period may be extended up to an additional 30 days at the discretion of the reviewing officers. All objections received will be responded to, in writing, by the reviewing official before proceeding. The written response(s) may contain instructions to the responsible official. Once the reviewing officer has issued the response(s) to the objections, and the responsible official has followed any instructions contained in the written response(s), the responsible official may sign the final ROD and implement the Project.

Availability of the Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs

Electronic copies of the Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs on CD are available for public distribution. The Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs also is available for review and downloading from the BLM website noted above.

Printed copies of the Final EIS and Proposed LUPAs are available for review at the following locations:

Wyoming

BLM Wyoming State Office
BLM Rawlins Field Office

Colorado

BLM Colorado State Office
BLM Little Snake Field Office
BLM White River Field Office
BLM Grand Junction Field Office

Utah

BLM Utah State Office
BLM Fillmore Field Office
BLM Moab Field Office
BLM Price Field Office
BLM Richfield Field Office
BLM Salt Lake Field Office
BLM Vernal Field Office
Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Ashley National Forest
Manti-La Sal National Forest

If you have any questions regarding the NEPA or land-use planning process used to prepare the EIS and LUPAs or need additional information regarding the Project, please contact Tamara Gertsch, BLM National Project Manager, at tgertsch@blm.gov or (307) 775-6115.

Sincerely,

A large, stylized handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "Michael G. Valle". Below it, there is a smaller, more cursive handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read "for".

Mary Jo Rugwell
State Director

Attachment

Attachment 1

Regulations for Filing a Valid Protest

[Code of Federal Regulations]

[Title 43, Volume 2]

[Revised as of October 1, 2002]

From the U.S. Government Printing Office via GPO Access

[CITE: 43CFR1610.5-2]

[Page 20]

TITLE 43--PUBLIC LANDS: INTERIOR

CHAPTER II--BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

PART 1600--PLANNING, PROGRAMMING, BUDGETING--Table of Contents

Subpart 1610--Resource Management Planning

Sec. 1610.5-2--Protest procedures.

(a) Any person who participated in the planning process and has an interest which is or may be adversely affected by the approval or amendment of a resource management plan may protest such approval or amendment. A protest may raise only those issues which were submitted for the record during the planning process.

(1) The protest shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Director. The protest shall be filed within 30 days of the date the Environmental Protection Agency published the notice of receipt of the final environmental impact statement containing the plan or amendment in the Federal Register. For an amendment not requiring the preparation of an environmental impact statement, the protest shall be filed within 30 days of the publication of the notice of its effective date.

(2) The protest shall contain:

- (i) The name, mailing address, telephone number and interest of the person filing the protest;**
- (ii) A statement of the issue or issues being protested;**
- (iii) A statement of the part or parts of the plan or amendment being protested;**
- (iv) A copy of all documents addressing the issue or issues that were submitted during the planning process by the protesting party or an indication of the date the issue or issues were discussed for the record; and**
- (v) A concise statement explaining why the State Director's decision is believed to be wrong.**

(3) The Director shall promptly render a decision on the protest. The decision shall be in writing and shall set forth the reasons for the decision. The decision shall be sent to the protesting party by certified mail, return receipt requested.

(b) The decision of the Director shall be the final decision of the Department of the Interior.